

Jack (J.C.) Lawn was at the time of the King assassination a supervisor in the FBIHQ Civil Rights section. He kept a very large tickler the FBI failed to produce in my C.A. 75-1996 but I found a number of references to it. Before going to DEA he became an asistant FBI director.

Before become Tampa SAC allen McCreight was head of the FBI's FOIPA section. Contrary to what he told the reporters, about the ^{Tampa}FBI making available what "is available to any citizen," he presided over wholesale withholdings of what under the law the FBI could noth withhold, over false swearings to the courts with regard to this, and even when he was before the Senate FOIA subcommittee and confronted with about 25 of my FOIA requests the FBI had violat~~ed~~ed the law by ignoring for years, he refused to tell the Senate that the FBI would comply with the law or offer any explanation for its violations of the law. Even when the DW witness testified that he could not justify the FBI's behavior with my requests in any way.

FBI May Have Abetted Steinbrenner's Dealings

Post 8/11/90
From News Services

NEW YORK, Aug. 10—George Steinbrenner's connections in the FBI's Tampa division gave him confidential information on Howard Spira and other business associates and helped the New York Yankees' principal owner obtain a presidential pardon in 1989, former FBI agents said this week.

The report comes amid speculation Steinbrenner might be seeking substantive alteration of the agreement he signed in conjunction with Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent's finding that Steinbrenner's \$40,000 payment to Spira for information about former Yankees outfielder Dave Winfield constituted conduct "not in the best interests of baseball."

Steinbrenner already has been rebuffed in a bid to have the agreement changed for what his attorneys described as tax and legal purposes. So far, Vincent has given no indication he would be receptive to a request for any other changes.

Unidentified investigators told the New York Times that background checks made for Steinbrenner were part of a long pattern of assistance orchestrated by Phillip McNiff, a former FBI agent who is now a vice president at American Ship Building, which Steinbrenner owns.

The agents said that Steinbrenner reciprocated by inviting bureau officials to his personal box at Tampa Bay Buccaneers games and offering high-paying positions to those who were especially helpful.

According to the Times report, the most unusual assistance given to Steinbrenner came in 1979 when he applied for a presidential pardon for his 1974 conviction for making illegal contributions to Richard

Nixon's presidential re-election campaign.

In a routine investigation, an applicant is taken to the FBI office to be fingerprinted and questioned, and an extensive background check is performed.

However, an investigator was sent to Steinbrenner's house on a holiday because "it would be convenient for George," one agent told the Times.

"The idea was to help George breeze on through with his application," the agent said. President Reagan pardoned Steinbrenner in 1989.

McNiff, the special agent in charge of the Tampa office at the time, later became one of three FBI agents, including John Lawn, a former Drug Enforcement Agency chief, to work for Steinbrenner.

Duties McNiff performed for Steinbrenner boss included spearheading the investigation of Spira that led to Steinbrenner's ouster from baseball on July 30. McNiff reportedly used his contacts to get access to FBI computer files.

The paper also reported that McNiff, who plays basketball with agents in charge of the Spira investigation, pressed a U.S. attorney for an indictment against the admitted gambler.

The agents told the Times that they came forward because they felt Steinbrenner had hurt the reputation of the FBI.

Neither McNiff nor Steinbrenner returned phone calls to their offices.

Spira was indicted on charges of attempting to extort money from Steinbrenner and threatening Steinbrenner and Winfield.

Allen McCreight, the current head of the Tampa office, denied any wrongdoing on the part of the bureau or its agents.

Steinbrenner reportedly got pardon, data with help of FBI

NEW YORK (AP) — George Steinbrenner's connections in the FBI's Tampa division gave him confidential information on Howard Spira and other business associates and helped the New York Yankees owner obtain a presidential pardon, former FBI agents said Thursday.

Unidentified investigators told *The New York Times* that Steinbrenner, who also owns the American Ship Building Company in Tampa, reciprocated by inviting bureau officials to his personal box at Tampa Bay Buccaneer games and offering high-

paying positions to those who were especially helpful.

The retired agents said the background checks made for Steinbrenner were part of a long pattern of assistance orchestrated by Phillip McNiff, a former FBI agent who is now a vice president at American Ship Building.

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FBI denies aiding Steinbrenner

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Duties McNiff performed for the Yankees boss included spearheading

the investigation of Spira, which led to his and Steinbrenner's downfall in baseball. McNiff reportedly used his contacts to gain access to information on Spira from the FBI computer files.

The agents told the *Times* that they came forward now because they felt Steinbrenner had hurt the reputation of the FBI.

Neither McNiff nor Steinbrenner returned phone calls to their offices.

But Allen McCreight, the current head of the Tampa office, denied any wrongdoing on the part of the bureau or its agents. He called the agency's policy of maintaining contact with the business community "sound public relations."

"Contacts with Mr. Steinbrenner by personnel of the Tampa office are very infrequent and limited to liaison contacts based on his position as a prominent figure in Tampa's business community," McCreight said in a written statement.

"Neither Mr. McNiff nor Mr. Steinbrenner have ever attempted, in

any manner whatsoever, to influence any FBI decision or course of action; nor has either made any request which could even remotely be considered as improper.

"More specifically, Mr. McNiff has never used his former position with the FBI as a means to obtain information or services that are not otherwise available to any citizen."